



#### Agile Development for ACE

U. S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is working to complete core trade processing functionality in the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) in approximately three years. To accomplish this goal, CBP is using the Agile development methodology. Agile is an iterative software development methodology that focuses on producing smaller pieces of functionality more frequently, resulting in a more flexible, user-focused development process. CBP will build software as “services” and establish a “service-oriented architecture” (SOA), which allows for individual business tasks to be developed once and then re-used for multiple processes. CBP will also develop code using open standards, which eliminates the use of proprietary software and customized off-the-shelf products and makes the system less costly to maintain.

The Agile development methodology begins with a collection of user stories that are gathered from stakeholder input. Within the Agile environment, core teams are formed to collaborate together in designing, coding and testing new functionality. Each team includes an Agile team lead, a capability product owner, subject matter experts (SMEs), developers, and testers.

The Agile teams develop software code in two week cycles called sprints. After completing one week of planning and six sprints, an Increment is complete. Following the increment, a planning week is allocated for sprint retrospective discussions and for the preparation of the next increment cycle.

At the end of twelve weeks, workable software is demonstrated to the team and a potentially shippable increment (PSI) is developed that can be integrated into production. CBP anticipates deploying new functionality about every six months but will work closely with stakeholders to determine the exact frequency at which new capabilities are deployed.

Four Agile development teams are working on upcoming capabilities:

- Automated Export System (AES) Re-engineering/Manifest Baseline: Migration of current AES off the mainframe environment.
  - *Increment 2, Sprint 5 is currently in progress. This team is working on a total of four Increments, each comprising six sprints.*
- Partner Government Agency (PGA) Message Set: Automates the collection, processing and sharing of information required by PGAs, and will replace the myriad paper forms currently submitted to several individual Federal Agencies by the trade community during the cargo importation process.
  - *Sprint 4 (of 6) is currently in progress.*



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### **Agile Development for ACE (Cont.)**

- Automated Corrections/Cancellations: Capability to accept (or deny) corrections and/or cancellations to an entry sent by Trade via EDI to entries already on file with CBP.
  - *Sprint 4 (of 6) is currently in progress.*
- Initial Entry Summary Edits: Foundation for the ability to process system “edits” or checks on the quality and accuracy of incoming entry summary data.
  - *Sprint 4 (of 6) is currently in progress.*

### **Clarification on ACE System Outages**

The following clarification was issued in response to comments received from trade community members pointing to a perceived increase in recent ACE system outages.

*For purposes of this communication, “system outage” is defined as any period where a specific ACE environment is unavailable to the trade community. This includes both planned weekly maintenance outages and unscheduled outages. There are two ACE environments available to the trade – Production and Certification (CERT). Outages to the ACE Certification environment ONLY impact parties testing software.*

### **Data Review**

Based on CBP system availability measurements, there were fewer hours of unscheduled outages in 2012 as compared to 2011. In addition, a comparison of the data between January-February 2013 and January–February 2012 shows a significant decline in the number of outages for these first two months of 2013 compared to 2012.

CBP is constantly working to collect meaningful performance data. In order to help improve ACE’s availability, CBP requests that the Trade user community report any specific ACE system performance issues and concerns to [ACE.Support@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:ACE.Support@cbp.dhs.gov) or 1-866-530-4172.

### **Process Review**

CBP conducts two regularly scheduled system outages and communicates each of these to the trade community via the Cargo Systems Messaging Service (CSMS):

- To maximize capabilities for users, CBP performs weekly upgrades to the ACE Production environment. In order to do these upgrades, the system is taken off-line for a limited time on Saturday evenings when usage is historically low.



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- CBP conducts weekly upgrades to the ACE Certification (CERT) data environment on Wednesday mornings beginning at 6:00 a.m. Again, these upgrades ONLY impact trade software developers who use the environment to test their software, and do NOT impact users transmitting data to the ACE Production environment.

CSMS messages related to outages are issued for various reasons. For planned outages (regular weekly maintenance and certification outages), CBP includes information on items that are being deployed when applicable and any known information on extended outage times. In the event of an unscheduled outage, CBP places the highest priority on resolution and also communicates the issue, impact, duration and resolution via CSMS. When applicable, this message will also include a notification to use down time procedures.

### **Communication Going Forward**

As stated above, CBP conducts CERT upgrades on Wednesday mornings. Previously, these upgrades were performed on weekends. CBP also began sending CSMS messages to alert trade users of all scheduled outages. This practice may be creating the impression that more system outages are occurring than in the past. Therefore, CBP has changed the subject line of CSMS messages announcing planned outages to reinforce the fact that the outages are routine, planned events and not unplanned system downtime.

### **REMINDER: Responding to CBP Forms for both ACE and ACS Entry Summaries**

CBP wants to remind importers that they may respond to CBP Forms 28, 29 and 4647 via the ACE Secure Data Portal for both ACE **and** ACS entry summaries. While some ACE portal functionality is exclusive to ACE Entry Summaries, forms for both ACE and ACS entry summaries can be addressed via the ACE Portal.

Authorized users can view and respond to CBP forms through the portal if the ACE account has selected portal as their “Mode of Communication.” The modes of communication, “Mail” and “Portal,” can be selected at either the top account level or the sub-account (importer of record) level. Please remember that if the mode is selected at the top account level, then all the forms pertaining to the top account and any sub-account will be sent by the “Mode of Communication” selected at the top account level.

If your “Mode of Communication” is set as “Mail,” you will receive a paper copy of the forms sent via the U.S. Postal Service. Brokers will receive their courtesy copy as they do today.



#### **Enhanced AM-068 Entry Summary Report**

The standard and modified versions of the AM-068 Entry Summary Report, found in Account Management / Detail Reports/ Entry Summary sub-folder, have been enhanced to include two new prompt filters to improve the manner in which liquidated and released entries can be included in this report. The two prompt filters are:

- Include Entries with no Liquidation Date: Yes
- Include Entries with No Release Date: Yes

#### **Trade Support Network (TSN) Presentations and Recordings**

CBP has posted the presentations and recordings from the February 26-27, 2013 TSN Webinar sessions to CBP.gov. These sessions provide information on the current status of ACE, CBP plans for moving forward with ACE functionality and information on the CBP Agile Software Development Teams working on AES Re-Engineering/Manifest Baseline; PGA Message Set; Automated Corrections/Cancellations; and Entry Summary Edits functional development. The URL to access these postings is:

[http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/trade/automated/modernization/trade\\_support\\_network/session\\_highlights](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/trade/automated/modernization/trade_support_network/session_highlights)

#### **PGA Message Set Pilot Overview Presentations and Recording**

CBP has posted the overview presentations and recording from the March 20, 2013 ACE PGA Message Set Pilot Webinar session to CBP.gov. This session provided an overview of the pilot and representatives from CBP, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) briefed participants on the details of the PGA Message Set development and on each agencies upcoming pilots. The URL to access these postings is:

[http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/trade/automated/modernization/whats\\_new/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/trade/automated/modernization/whats_new/)

#### **Reminder of the Month**

##### **Saving Reports to your Computer in the Excel Format**

Please check the following prompts to enable file downloads when trying to save your report to your computer in an Excel Format:

- Go to "Internet Explorer"
- Click on "Tools," "Internet Options," "Security" tab, "Custom Level"
- Locate the "Downloads" setting
- Select "enable" for "Automatic prompting for file downloads," "File download," and "Font Download"



### ***Your Questions:***

#### **Why do I see more records in the MMM-9009 In-Bond Details – 2 Hour report than in the MMM-6009 In-Bond Details Report when I use the same dates in both reports?**

The MMM-6009 In-Bond Details Report will only list the latest version of the In-Bond-Bill of Lading (BOL) number combination transmitted to CBP (e.g., the same In-Bond/BOL number is updated four times, the latest version will be listed in the report). For the MMM-9009 In-Bond Details – 2 Hour report, all versions of the In-Bond/BOL numbers are listed in the report (e.g., In-Bond/BOL versions 1, 2, 3 and 4 are transmitted, the report will list versions 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the report).

#### **Which report can I run to find the Bill of Lading numbers for Ocean and Rail Shipments?**

The Bill of Lading number is available in the standard MMM-9022 BOL Status - 2 Hour Refresh Report. Additionally, a Master Bill of Lading number object is available in the Summary Header / Cargo sub – folder and may be added to a modified ESM 7008 or the ESM-7068 Entry Summary Report.

#### **Is the related party indicator also available in ACE Reports?**

Yes, the related party indicator is available for ACE entry summaries only. The data element is located in the Entry Summary 10002 Universe under the Summary Line/Line Indicators sub-folder. The data element may be added to the ESM 7008 or the ESM-7068 Entry Summary Reports. This data element cannot be added to the Account Management reports.